In Chattopadhyay I-4, 5 (no date) 1941 AR7 Khasi AR7

her children and sister's children, using an additional term for the latter, to make the distinction clear. The mother's brother's wife, and the father's sister live elsewhere, and cannot therefore share the same kinship term with the mother. The husbands of the mother's sisters are comparable to the father, as these males are all outsiders who have married the women of the house. The actual father "U Kpa" is the husband of the actual mother "Ka Kmie" and is clearly distinguished. The others are the husbands of the "Kmie San" and "Kmie Nah." Hence they are given the labels of "Kpah San" and "Kpa Nah" or "Kpa Khynnah." They derive their kinship terms denoting "father" through their wives who are called mothers by the children—not through any sexual rights on the wife's sisters. Such sexual rights, as noted before, have no existence. Hodson is not justified in ascribing this identity of kinship terms to alleged marriage rules and sexual rights which were operative in a hypothetical earlier type of Khasi society.

The mother's brother is important to the Khasi child, and has a special name, Ma, with an adjective such as Rangbah to indicate his position among his brothers. His relation with his sister's children is different from that of the mother's sister's husbands. It is more or less formal and ceremonial. A similar relative, on the father's side of the family, is the father's sister, though her position is not so important. Nevertheless, the two relatives are comparable. The mother's brother is in charge of the management of the mother's ancestral property and helps in performing important social ceremonies for the group. The father's sister is the repository of the bones of the father's family; in her is vested the preservation of the family religious traditions. Both these relatives live in houses separate from those of the nephews and nieces concerned and are, in a sense, of other households. Each of them was born in the natal house of one of the parents. They are therefore clearly distinguished from the father, the mother, the sisters of the mother and their husbands. But a common term, allowing

Referring to the first type, we may say that the second type results from the men of the house going out to marry women of other houses. As the men settle down in the wife's mother's house and later on set up a separate house on her land, the continuity of tradition in the house of birth is kept up by the women who remain behind.

It would however be a mistake to suppose that the bond between the members born in a house is severed on marriage. We have noted before that the bones of a dead man return eventually to his mother's house, for final deposition in the clan cemetary, or at least that of the extended household. The bond between the mother's brother and sister's children has also been noted as well as the authority exercised by the former over the extended family.

Further links between a man and his mother's Kur will appear from a study of the rules of inheritance and land tenure with regard to men. Any property that a man acquires before marriage belongs to his mother's house. Myatri U Sohu Rai, for example, earned money before his marriage, and he purchased some land with this amount, in a village called Mawtuh. It will go to his sisters and their heiresses on his death. The earnings of a man after marriage, and after he has settled down in his wife's mother's house (or wife's house), among Khasis proper, generally go to the wife and daughters on death. But any gifts made by the parents at marriage have to be returned on death. Similarly, if a man has earned money after marriage, independently of his wife's capital, a part can be claimed on death by the man's mother's group.

Again, if a man returns to his mother's village after marriage, he can exercise his rights to cultivate the common land there. Every village community has its common land known as Ri Raid. As David Roy states (CN), "people can occupy a raid land where they build their houses and cultivate. For cultivation purposes land not more than can be cultivated is taken. The occupant can sell his house and the site and the garden of

his house or paddy field or grove; but the sale does not extend to anything more than his right of occupancy.....Any site, garden or piece of cultivation if abandoned, can be taken by another."

A son of a house of the village, of which the Kur is of the ancient settlers or has been given similar privileges, has the right of building a house, and of cultivating land in the Ri Raid. Reference has been made to the case practice whereby a man brings his wife from her mother's house to his own village. In such a case he may set up a separate house on the community land, and cultivate some of it, to maintain his wife and children. The property will pass, on his death, to his daughters as usual. It will not go to his mother or sister.

(a) The man U Hariluh married twice, but did not settle down with his wife on either occasion. He built a house in Mawphlang which is his mother's ancestral village and brought each wife there. Both of them were divorced in turn and have left. If any of his wives had lived with him the house would have gone to his daughters. Now, however, the heiress is Ka Jrem, the daughter of a sister. [Genealogy XIII].

(b) The woman Ka Lakimon is of the old Lyngkhi clan of Mawphlang. When U Lyman married her, he set up a house in Mawphlang and cultivated land. But on his death, the woman went away to Shillong with her children, about 10-15 years ago, selling the house and abandoning the jhum land. The man U Bollester has recently come to Mawphlang and is working in U Sohn Rai's house. If he settles down, i.e., marries and wants to set up a house, he can do so on the Ri Raid. (Genealogy IV).

(c) The foundress of the Khar Dumpep clan was a woman of the village Dumpep, and of clan Khar Dubling. She had two other sisters. One of the three sisters went to Mylliem, and another came to Mawphlang while the third remained at Dumpep as Ka Khadduh. The girl who went to Mylliem founded the Khar Sohnoh Kur and the girl who came to Mawphlang founded

Khar Dumpep. These three clans—Khar Dohling, Khar Dumpep and Khar Sohnoh called intermarry on account of their common ancestry. U Alsara, the sister's husband of U Sohn Rai is of Khar Dumpep clan and furnished me with the above details. He stated that his ancestress married a man of the old settler clans of Mawphlang and came to her husband's village. This man, being of the Khadar Kur, could build a house and cultivate land from the community holding. The property thus acquired passed to the daughters; and gradually the clan Khar Dumpep grew more numerous, and acquired rights in the Ri Raid like an old clan. [Genealogy III].

(d) The family of the first wife of U Omsping furnishes another illustration. The woman Ka Li came with her widowed mother from Cherra. The father had been a Syntong from Jowai. The girl has been married by U Sohon, who is a member of one of the old settler clans. He has built a house for his family and made an excellent potato garden out of the common land for the maintenance of his wife and children. They will inherit it from him according to the usual Khasi custom. [Genealogy III].

(e) U Roberts who is a Syiemg of Jowai, and a Christian by religion (Genealogy V) came to Mawphlang in 1930-31 and after a couple of years married a non-Christian Khasi girl by Khasi rites thereby losing his membership of the church. He cultivated Ri Raid land when he stayed with his wife's mother Ka Shana [Genealogy V]. This woman is of Khar Sohno clan. One of her ancestresses, came to Mawphlang only a few generations ago, and married a man of the old clans. Her descendants have thereby obtained the privilege of cultivating Ri Raid. U Roberts has divorced his wife and no longer possesses this right. He now works as a tailor in the village, and lives with a friend near the bazaar.

(f) Gurdon has suggested that the large number of clans having Khar as the first part of the name of the Kur have originated from ancestresses who were carried off from the plains.

[p. 33]

CHAPTER IV

The Khasi marriage prohibitions may now be discussed in some detail. The rules regarding intrusive and extrusive have already been noted. The Khasi is also exogamous with regard to his Kur. This bar extends to clans derived from the same century. A Khasi cannot also marry his father's brother's daughter, or his father's father's brother's daughter. He cannot marry his mother's brother's daughter so long as this uncle is alive but may do so after the death of this relative. He cannot also marry his father's sister's daughter so long as the father is alive but may marry her after the death of his father. Gurdon remarks that even then "such unions are looked upon with disfavour by Khasis." In the War country, such marriages are totally prohibited."

It has been noted in the previous chapter, that the basic unit of Khasi society is the house where the children are born and where the women stay all their lives and with which the men also are connected intimately even when they go elsewhere on marriage. It has also been observed that the authority is vested entirely in the men. The women have various rights not found in many patrilineal groups; but it would be a mistake to underestimate the position of the men in the house. The father is the head of his small family—the simple family consisting of himself, his wife and the children. He is also the person in authority over his sisters' households in matters affecting the extended family as opposed to the simple family. Although his own children, and the children born in his natal house are distinguished on account of their social and economic differentiation, nevertheless, they are, to a certain extent, both like children to

him. His own brothers again, are to him his successors to the permanent rights, which are linked with the house of birth. Their bones all return to the common cemetery of ancestral home. Apparently, this close association of the brothers with the house of birth is responsible for the rule that children of brothers cannot marry. If we formulate the prohibitions from the standpoint of the women, we can get a clear idea of their significance.

A Khasi woman cannot marry her father's brother's son; nor even the son of the cousin. Again, a Khasi woman cannot marry her father's sister's son during the life-time of her father; but may do so after his death. As we know, the father's death and return of the bones severs the link of the children and their mother with the father's house of birth. The women who safeguard and maintain the Khasi religious traditions, will therefore raise no objection to the marriage of a woman of their house with the father's sister's son, who is now no longer closely related and is a man of another house merely. But the case is different with the other cross-cousin. A woman cannot marry her mother's brother's son, even after the death of that uncle, without incurring odium. In the War country, such a marriage is not permissible even after the uncle's death. We know that the relation with the mother's brother is not severed either at marriage or at death. The links are maintained even after death. His bones come back and rest in the cemetery of the house and the clan of his woman relatives. The decease of this uncle does not therefore place his son in the category of a person with whom the formerly existing bond has been broken. We may sum up the distinction as follows :—

In the case of the father's sister's son, the death of the father breaks the link between a woman and her cousin in the other house, as neither of the parents of that male cousin were born in the house or extended family of the woman. In the case of the mother's brother's son, the father of that cousin is of the woman's own house and one with whom the bond endures even

among Khasis. Even the Garos whom he cites apparently as representing a type of social organization which the Khasis had earlier, do not encourage marriage with the father's sister's daughter. There is also no evidence that a Khasi ever married his mother's brother's widow. As I have shown earlier, the marriage prohibitions regarding cross-cousins can be explained on the basis of existing social and economic forces in Khasi society. The rule regarding exclusion of the F.B.S.D. merely states that a woman cannot marry the son of her pure Kha. It is not a new prohibition.

We may now state the reasons why a Khasi calls his father's brothers by the same term as father, and the wives of these males, as mother, using of course a qualifying term for seniority and juniority. As noted before, a Khasi boy or girl calls his mother's sister's children brothers and sisters. He avoids them strictly in marriage. They are not like cross-cousins, marriageable under certain circumstances. Any sexual approach towards them would have led in the old days to exile and also excommunication. The children of the father's brother are similarly excluded from the category of marriageable persons. They are like brothers and sisters, and as such are addressed as Bah, Bing and Kong. They are referred to as Pure Kha. As Rivers observes, the term Pure conveys, when used as a prefix, the idea of having common rights or status. It also means, when used by itself, a younger brother or sister. The term Kha refers to relation (by birth) through a male. It is used for example in the combination Bah Kha, which denotes both children of cross-cousins, the children of the mother's brother as well as the father's sister. A Khasi man (and) woman has similarly another set of parallel cousins who are sexually tabooed. These persons are given terms denoting the father and mother, with certain modifications. As the children of the father's brothers are also sexually tabooed, it would be natural to extend to them the terms used for the parents of the other group of non-marriageable cousins.

Tyrwhitt Keene, for the reciprocal relations. Normally, however, the mother-in-law is referred to by a separate special term which does not stress this aspect of the relation between the two persons.

[illegible]

- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- [illegible]

[illegible] creation of transaction of money (*khindan*) during the period, compulsory social participation in marriage, household worship, and funeral ritual, and the pride for the privilege in succession to *sien-skip* (chieftain ship) hold together the inner structure of the society in fulfilling its function.

Family (Ke-ing)—The functions of family centre round the :

1. performance of basic religious rites,
2. management and inheritance of family property,
3. maintenance of social relations with the kin of *ka-k'juk* and *ka-dan*,
4. protection of familial kin.

From the above discussions it may be inferred that the social groupings of the Khasis function in different dimensions and make the individuals aware of their duties, and obligations towards each other. In the process of socialisation and enculturation of the individual they learn that the individuals, the different social groups and the community at large are inseparable.

Even from infancy a boy is infused with the idea that family comes first in regard, sub-clan second, and clan third. The kin of the family are primary relatives, and those of the sub-clan and the clan are secondary and tertiary respectively. One bow and three arrows given by a father to his son in his naming ceremony (*jarkhaw*) symbolise their relationships with the three social groups. With the first arrow man has to fight for *ski-ing* (members of the same family) and *ski-k'juk* (members of the same sub-clan), with the second for his *ski-dar* and with the third for the state.

He calls this the world. He a Khasi places his family on one side :— 601

Ka Ensie (Mother)	*U Khasi* (Son)	*Ka Ensie* (Mother)

which consists of his mother, himself, his sister, and, the world on the other side :—

Ka Ensie Kha (His father's mother)	*U Kpa, U Kpa Kha* (Father, brother)	*Ka Pla Kha* (His father's sister)

But he places himself again between that family and that world, and claims again :—

Ka Pla Kha (Father's sister.)	*U Khasi Kha* (Father's son) (Himself)	*Ka Jaitbir* (Father's sister's daughter)

Thus he brings it nearer to himself and claims again :—

Ka Ensie Kha Ka u (Father's mother)	(*u Khasi Kha*) (Himself, Father's son.)	*Ka Pura Kha* (Father's brother's daughter.)

Thus in the family—the stands between the mother and his sister ;—and outside in the world—the father—stands between his (the father's) mother and his (the father's) sister.

Thus in the world the Khasi stands between 602
his mother and his sister, and between his father's mother and father's sister.

This happens when on the death of his uncle he stands between, and on behalf of, his sister and mother; and, on the death of his father, he stands between, and on behalf of, his father's sister and his father's sister's daughter.

On the death of his father's younger or elder brother he stands between, and, on behalf of, his father's mother and his father's brother's daughter.

16:Dec 1-9 (no date) 1938 A&T Sheet A&T

527 The Khasi's interpretation of his life is this,—"*kong jaid ca ka kyrdan*," i.e., from woman sprang the kind, or species; "*U kha cha ei ka ryoing*," i.e., it is the father who gives the stature or person. Thus, the mother produces the kind or species, and this kind '*ka jaid*' springs and remains in the man's own house ('*ka hing*') by his mother, and is continued by his sister and his sister's child.

526 The stature or person, is produced, crystallised and is endowed with power and fortune, that is, with power to resist forces which affect a man's capacity to grow in power and in fortune, by his father, father's younger brother and father's elder brother, and by the father's nephews.

602 Thus the Khasi says all those who spring
• 526 from the same womb are his kind, '*jaid-o song*'; that is, they are forbidden as "sacred" humans, he says, they are suckled of one and the same breast. They are '*song jaid*.'

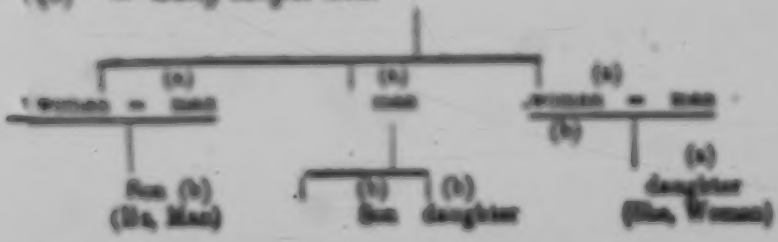
527 Again, he says, all who receive or derive re-
602 spectively their stature from the common source which gives birth to man's body—o *song*, that is, they are tabooed or are sacred as they come out or spring or are generated from one navel-string (umbilical cord), o *sulpet kha*. They are '*song sulpet kha*.'

(a) = *Song jaid*

Table Women

(1)

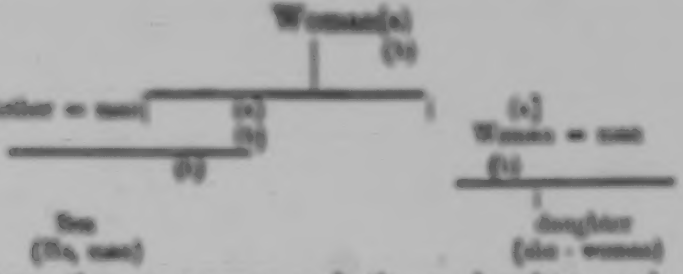
(b) = *Song sulpet kha*.



Thus the Khasi says, "I do not marry (and I cannot even think in this wise of) my own mother, my own sister. They are of the (a) group. I cannot think like that of my father's mother (kwie kha), father's sister (nia kha), father's brother (kpa kha), father's brother's children (para kha). They are of the (b) group." On his mother's side a *nang jaid*, that is, he is *nang* or forbidden as being of the same clan, kind, species. On his father's side a *nang ashpet kha*, that is, he is *nang*, forbidden as being of the same umbilical cord. [927]

Thus he finds only himself and his bakha (cousins, the children of his father's sister),—he being the son of a man born of one woman, and they the children of the sister of that person, born of whom 'sisters' were generated from one man.

Table



Thus the a woman and the a daughter and all those between these two and those after these two, join to the a woman in life through the two primary stages of life in its essence when it was sustained through the umbilical cord and later by the woman's breasts.

So the a woman and the b son and all those between the two and those after these two,

16:Roy 1-9 (no date) 1938 AS? Khasi AS?

joins to the a woman in life through only one of the primary stages in the life essence when it was sustained through the umbilical cord.

Thus the connection of the a group is sustained to a much longer period and greater intensity in its life-formation to the a woman, than the b man.

Hence we have the double source of sustenance of life producing, through the umbilical cord and the breast, the single group a, while the single connection of life-formation through the umbilical cord produces a double a + b man-woman connection with the b man.

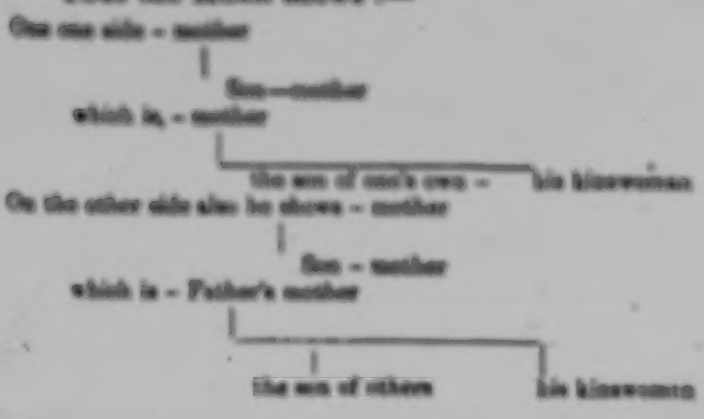
Thus he stands alone in the centre and he places his *jaids* on *ka kpoh* (the kind which springs from the same womb), that is, those of (a) group (see tables) on one side, and he places his *kha* or those connected, or sprung of, the one umbilical cord, that is, those of (b) group on the other side. On the other side is *ka ryndang ka rupiw*, the 'stature', the person from whom he also derives his. Thus the Khasi calls the source (placenta) from which he springs, *ka kur ka rupiw* (stature, person) *ki kha* as were u *snipet* (those connected or sprung of one umbilical cord).

Thus the Khasi has his house of *ki kur ki jaid* the relatives of his kind and species, and his world of *ki kha ki* man, relatives of other people's kind and species with whom they are able to propagate human life.

This interesting Khasi fabric of human relationship between man and his mother and father, of the connection between a man and his fellow-

human beings all over the four quarters of the globe (phi mieh ka pyrthei) with whom, in this world, he can give in marriage and take in marriage, shows the nature which is believed to be innate in the Khasi, and his supposed power of moulding the world. His nature is to grow and to remit, to extend and spread out. It is against his idea of life to remain narrow or limited and concentrated. He is not to be made small or made an orphan, it will not do for him and his idea of the world to "ask khlem, khun lalem ïei," stay without kind and species, without child, without issue. A negro would even seek to separate if there are no children of the union. His idea is, so to say, 'imperialistic,' to sow and spread out. As I wrote elsewhere, "A Khasi marries man and woman of all races; to his Khasi parent the issues are all one and the same without any distinction of caste or creed or colour or possessions. The children are the 'khun kha' (khun = child, kha = born, i.e. children who are born through the union of a descendant of the parent with a descendant of another parent), and these children are unified into families and are assimilated, in the Khasi idea of life, while these groups of families are traced to their mother and are made to revolve on this ancestress as the pivot of their existence."

Thus the Khasi shows :—


On one side – mother
Son – mother
which is, – mother
the son of one's own –
his kinswoman
On the other side also he shows – mother
Son – mother
which is – Father's mother
the son of others
his kinswoman

15: Natives G-S (1952-1956) 1967 AR? Khasi AR?

the matrilineal descent group has a distinguished function only when there is common residence and common property.

In Kongton, among 3 different clans (List 10), Pohtsong and Khonsit accounted for the majority of the population, while the rest, seven or eight clans, were more or less of equal size. On the whole the population seemed more stable than that of Sohkynduh. However, as in Sohkynduh, actual descent groups amounted to 45, many of which have the same clan name but could not always establish genealogical relationship with one another, nor was there any functional cohesion. I failed to reconstruct the history of the formation of these descent groups: the villagers had no memory of their past except very fragmentary information which was quite insufficient to account for their present composition. They only insisted that this was a very old village in comparison with Sohkynduh and other neighbouring villages.

While I was struggling with the villagers' scant accounts of their past and fragmented kinship relations among the present households, I was struck by the poorness of the villagers' genealogical memory in comparison with that of the Garo. Suppose A, B and C, who belonged to the same property-holding descent group three generations back: A and B being sisters and C being B's daughter. If B, including her descendants, moved away from the village two generations back, the present generation of A's and C's descendants would easily lose contact and knowledge of their genealogical relationship. This fact, on the other hand, illustrates some important aspects of the Khasi social structure: the kinship relation—matrilineal descent link—is not a significant factor beyond the scale of the household (property-holding descent group), and locality is more important than matrilineal descent for the formation of the Khasi community. Through the predominant practice of endogamy on the level of the village, the small segments (found on a level of a household or a group of a few households) of various different clans clustered in a village are linked by affinal relations each other, by which altogether form a well knit social organization of a village community. The cohesion and solidarity of the Khasi village community is strengthened by the local endogamy not by the localized lineage organization.

In fact, in contrast with the rather loose kinship relations which link different households, the affinal relations link almost every households in the village, as shown in Fig. 10. The lines, ———, indicate marriage relations between living members of households, and the lines, - - - - -, indicate affinal relations established through dead members of present households or through spouses' kinship relations at Sohkynduh, as in November 1955. In this way, except for one household (24), members of a single household are all linked together through affinal or cognatic ties. In some cases, the affinal relations between

15. Nakane K-5 (1953-1954) 1967 ...

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FIG. 10. — *Kinship and Household Location in Sukhnyndah.*
——— Matrilineal kinships; relations among household members.
——— Affinal relations (direct) among household members.
- - - - - Affinal relations (indirect) among household members.

particular two families are not connected to one, but may be accommodated two or three, though I omitted to indicate these in Fig. 10.

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There are some extensions of marriage relations with members outside the village. In Sukhnyndah, out of 88 (48 housewives and 40 their husbands) 13 men and 2 women came from neighbouring villages. Owing to the predominant uxorilocal arrangement, those who came in from outside the village were mostly men. By these members, five different *kur*, new to Sukhnyndah, were found, as shown in List 7 (17-21). Most of these outsiders came from villages inside the Kudashinong, or villages no further than a day's journey there and back. This area might be called a secondary endogamous area, and includes more than half a dozen villages. In Kongtun, 20 husbands and 3 women came from neighbouring villages by their marriages. The secondary endogamous areas of Kongtun and of Sukhnyndah are not the same but they overlap in certain places, the surrounding areas being centred on each village. There were, by December 1955, no instances of direct marriage between these two villages.

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621
[795]

There are a few exceptions to local endogamy, such as those individuals who have become Christians and are educated in towns like Shillong or Cherrapunjee. They usually move to a town, seeking

society" among the matrilineal Central Bantus, Richards says that the determining factor in residence at marriage is the marriage payment or the type of goods and services which the bridegroom gives (Richards, 1950, p. 244). However, the Khasi have no such custom in the marriage contract, it is therefore out of the question to explain the two types of residence in this way. In the case of the Khasi, the determining factor is the type of marriage with relation to the rule of inheritance and ownership of property which is closely related to the structure of the clan. Khasi marriages can be divided into two categories i.e., marriage with an heiress and with a non-heiress. Marriages with an heiress must be uxorilocal. This accounts for category 1 or 2 of the household pattern. On the other hand, marriages with a non-heiress become uxorilocal and correspond to category 4 of the household unit.

11. [illegible] AND THE HEIRESS

A man married to an heiress, usually lives with his wife's parents and her unmarried or divorced brothers and sisters. For a man, life after marriage under such circumstances require great adjustment and endurance. The husband's status is especially weak when a male member of the wife's kin lives in the same household. The management of property and all economic activities are entirely controlled by the authority (wife's brother or maternal uncle) of the clan. The husband works in the wife's field under constant supervision from the authority. Both economic activities and domestic affairs are always under the management of this authority. The children have more attachment to, and are more obedient to, the maternal uncle than to the father. The tie between the uncle and the nephew is so strong that the father is rather like an additional member of the household. He is the last person to be introduced to visitors.

This family system is clearly reflected in the daily behaviour. When we visited the Khasi household of a youngest daughter, if a man (obviously the husband) came first to greet us, he always said "please wait, my wife (or mother-in-law) is coming." And it was the wife who entertained us, offering tea or pan and discussing matters with us, while her husband remained silent in the corner of the room, or in the next room. If her uncle or brother was there, he would be the person who talked to us, while his niece or sister served us. In such a case, we were seldom introduced to the husband. When I was working at Shella, I happened to stay in such a family. I had hardly any opportunity to talk to the husband during the two weeks of my stay. He left the house very early in the morning and came back late in the evening from the fields. While he was at home, he was

13: Stefanov G.-S (1955-1956) 1967 ABT Khasi ABT

ship. They still live in the same familiar atmosphere as before their marriage. The implications of this ambiguity in the married state are considerable. Particularly the husband's uncomfortable situation, when the wife is known, encourages him to take marriage less seriously.

A husband who undergoes hardship in his wife's house, finds himself in the authority in his sister's house, if he is not the authority, he can find at least a respected position as uncle or brother. In the case of a man of authority in the *siang*, the tendency for him to regard his *siang* as more important than his married life is proportionately stronger, as I will discuss later. Hence the most unstable and unsuccessful marriages are those between the heiress and the man of authority. This is one of the reasons we often find among the Khasi a brother or an uncle, who is already married, acting nevertheless as the head to a family (*siang*) and as a member of its domestic group. This means that he is in a state of temporary separation or divorced. Among the Ashanti, a man and his wife's brother are never found as members of a common household (Fortes, 1950, p. 262), but among the Khasi, on the contrary, a man and his wife's brother are often found as members of a common household. In such cases, however, the brother has no wife, or never brings his wife to his *siang*. Therefore, a man and his wife and his sister never reside together. As far as the residence of women is concerned, the Khasi keep to the strict descent rule; two women who belong to different descent groups never live together. This point differentiates the Khasi residence pattern, in which social structure is involved, from that not only of the Ashanti but also of the Yao where the head of a descent group can bring his wife to his sister's household, though, among other members, uxorilocal marriage is the rule. These differential aspects of matrilineal systems will be discussed from a more theoretical point of view later.

In addition, should a Khasi man even succeed in spending his life with his wife's kinsmen, as soon as the wife dies, he will usually return to his *siang*, that is, to his sister's house, where he is received warmly and where he often acts as the *de facto* authority, as in the similar situation of divorce and separation. Thus the strong matrilineal structural principle tends to orient a man towards his own descent group, the *siang*.

The man's attachment to his *siang* is very great throughout his life. In this regard the Khasi differs from the matrilineal Negri Sembilan Malay. Among the latter, returning to the matrilineal kin is regarded by the man as an imposition rather than as the enjoyment of a legitimate privilege (see Swift, 1958, p. 157).[1] This difference

1. He presents this fact as one of the reasons of the durability of marriage among the Negri Sembilan. Indeed, on this precise point they differ from the Khasi where marriage is rather unstable.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

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stems to come *firstly* from the different residential arrangement on marriage: among the Negri Sembilan a man marries into his wife's group, i.e. his wife's village; being thus separated from his kin, and as a result of the physical absence of his wife's brother or maternal uncle in his domestic family, he enjoys considerable rights in his wife's household—as Swift states, he is 'master in his own house.' On the other hand, since among the Khasi the man stays in the village where his mother's (or mother's successor's) house is, even after his marriage, his relation to his natal house is preserved; *secondly*, from the structural difference of organization of the descent group. Among the Khasi, the *siang* is always the centre of the descent group, based on unigeniture succession and inheritance. Hence, the core of the descent group is always found physically in a particular household, whereas among the Negri Sembilan, the descent group is *not* organized on a *household* level, but is a much wider organization, including apparently many households. Membership of an actual household and of a descent group are at different levels. To marry out and become a member of his wife's household means for the man the transfer of his household membership. Likewise, his sister's husband becomes a member of his sister's household. Thereby he becomes a secondary member of his sister's household after marriage though he keeps his membership in the descent group to which his sister belongs. Among the Khasi, membership of a descent group always corresponds to membership of a particular household. The Khasi man can always demand his rights at his natal house primarily, as he is a member of that descent group. But it should be noted that he has this right only in his mother's (or mother's successor's) household, not his other sisters' (non-heiress') and mother's sisters' households (unless one of them is successor of his mother), though they may belong to the same descent group. These matri kin's households are considered as separate *siang* (strict functional descent group) from his.

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Indeed, sometimes a man cannot find his *siang*, because his mother died leaving no daughter to succeed her, or his sister died leaving no successor, and his *siang* became extinct. Such a case occasionally happens when a man becomes a divorcé or a widower as he is getting old. Then he has to face a serious social and economic condition. In divorcing, he has to leave everything he owned, his earnings including the house which he built, and even children . . . really he has nothing left him except his body.[1] Such a wretched man collects some timber and makes a small hut for himself, though sometimes lads who sympathize with him help him to build it. Unless he finds some woman

1. A widower has an alternative solution—to remain in his late wife's household till he marries again, though his position is not comfortable there.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

brother (actually not likely to happen), the levirate has no sociological implication in the social structure, which is specifically related to the residence rule. The levirate seems to have a significant function only when a marriage is virilocal—when the husband has full rights over his residence and property. This is also another aspect where the Khasi structure shows a marked difference from that of the Ashanti and the Ila, etc.

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VI. Marriage of the Man of Authority of an *Iing*

Among these successful marital families, there are also shadows of a matrilineal order. These affect especially those men who are in the position of authority in an *iing*. Such a man, though he has an independent household with his wife and children, often visits his youngest sister's (or niece's) house, *iing (ka iing sew)*, and sometimes stays there. Such a man's attachment to his *iing* is not only social or psychological, but also often economic. The man, as authority of his natal *iing*, usually has economic control over the management, particularly so, if his *iing* has considerable property or active trading business. As husband/father in his family he works for his wife and children, but often takes into consideration as well the interests of his *iing*. I found such cases especially among richer villagers in Shella and Jatinga, where the main economic activities were based on trading.

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Among the Khasi, it is quite a traditional rule of the division of labour that women engage in trading activities at markets whether on a large or small scale. Husbands may carry goods from field to market, but male members are kept away from the actual scene of the selling and buying. However, these activities on the part of the women are controlled and accounted for by their uncle or brother, or even son (or, if no male member is available, by the husband), though in many cases they form separate domestic families. The man's control over the trade appears more marked when the scale of business is large.

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A man of Jatinga, who worked in a shop in Haflong, spent his salary in keeping his wife and children, but at the same time he kept the accounts of his sister who was a professional merchant. Thus, the economy of the *iing* and that of the co-residential group are crossed by the dual role of the man. Hence, among the Khasi, residential autonomy is not always an indication of economic autonomy. However, it should be clearly understood that a man's acquired property goes to his co-residential group, not to his *iing*.

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A man of authority is attached to his *iing* by the stronger ties of religious, social and economic (management) duties as well as by

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

592 593 602 613 [123] sentiment, in spite of his forming an independent domestic unit. Such a man with two households, the family of orientation and of procreation, says "one leg is in my sister's house and the other is in my wife's," and he feels more at home in his sister's. In villages, whenever a Khasi man in such a position invited me, I was always taken to his sister's (or niece's) house, his *iing*, not to his wife's. There I was warmly welcomed with highest respect by the women of the household as the guest of their uncle (or of their brother), the head of the *iing*. Khasi men whom outsiders often regard as hopeless in their social position, thus enjoy the highest status in their *iing*.

One Khasi gentleman who occupies a fairly high post in the Government, at Haflong, leaving his wife (non-heiress) and children at Shillong, to my question "when you go to Shillong into which house do you first step," immediately replied, "As soon as I get back to Shillong, I take the way to my sister's home and there take the evening meal with them, enjoying their talk. Then I go to my wife's house where my loving children are waiting." This shows a typical Khasi man's psychology in relation to a family of orientation and of procreation. His first concern on coming back to his homeland is whether his sister and her children are well, since he is the man of authority in that *iing*. He feels much more relaxed in his sister's house where he is held in higher regard and more cared for.

I came across many similar cases. In Jatinga and Sheila, such men on returning from their work, often have their evening meal with their sisters though their wives are waiting for them. Furthermore, if they choose to do so, they sleep at their sister's house without even going back to their wife's house. This results in an unstable married life, where a wife has to face a psychological handicap caused by the occasional absence of the husband, in spite of her advantageous position in a matrilineal and uxorilocal system. Many wives worry every day over whether or not their husbands will come to their house at night. And often this concern changes into sadness and loneliness when the husband does not return for several days on end. The wife knows her husband is at his sister's house in the same village. But she has no right to fetch her husband home. As in Western social dancing, the women have to wait till their partners come. During my field work I often came across these lonely women, just waiting for their husbands, each knowing he was only a few houses away. Though these Khasi women never show their feelings of loneliness in the presence of others, I, being a female anthropologist, was often told of the sadness of their married life. The situation of these women can be more easily understood if we remember the process of the segmentation of the *iing*, which separates each married woman from her descent group, her natal *iing*.

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15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

Thus, the marriage of a non-heiress and a man of authority also produces an unstable position for the husband in spite of his having an independent household. Therefore, the possibility of a really stable marriage is even more limited; it will occur only in the match of a non-heiress and a non-authority of the *iing*. But even these marriages cannot be free from the influence of a matrilineal social structure: the man of authority of the wife's *iing* may visit these couples now and then, curb the husband's power and remind both partners of the orientation towards the matri-kin, the *iing*, though this pressure is insignificant in comparison with that experienced by the heiress's family. Likewise, a husband now and then visits his youngest sister's house, *ka iing sen*. These constant matrilineal contacts offer husbands chances of escaping from even the slightest matrimonial tension. Whenever a Khasi man feels uneasiness, he will return to his sister's house rather than face a difficult situation with his wife. This tendency is maximised especially on the occasion of religious ceremonies, when all individuals are grouped around each *iing*.

It is apparent that the rules of the *iing* as the underlying structural pattern, function throughout the various categories of domestic unit of the Khasi community as the most important intrinsic force.

VII. Polygyny

After this long attempt at the structural analysis of marriages, I think one can theoretically predict what is the situation of polygyny among the Khasi. The theoretical framework elaborated through preceding discussions can also be tested by the empirical data in terms of polygyny.

Nowadays, the Khasi feel so strongly against polygyny that they have no knowledge even that they ever practised it. Many Khasi, in more sophisticated areas, did not believe my findings on polygyny in Sohkynduh and Kongton. I think this is due to the rapid Christianization of the Hills during the last hundred years. My interpreter, though he was not Christian, said to me in the village, "it is most regrettable to bring you to a village where we find polygyny." However, one of the ministers of the Cherra State to which the two villages belong, told me that there was no particular opposition to polygyny, though recent Christian influence gave people the idea that it was a shameful custom, and he mentioned the case of a polygynist in his area, a man who had recently died, who had had ten wives. In Jatinga whose inhabitants are all Christian, and in Shella where there has been much contact with, and influence by, Hindus, there were

children, but Christian influence has eradicated or driven underground the consumption by women and children. **Industrial arts.** The only industrial arts traditionally practiced in all households were a rudimentary carpentry and a simple utilitarian basketry. Other arts were few, and were practiced as village specialties: the washing and smelting of iron ore and the forging of hoes, daos, knives, swords, and cooking pots (upland Khasis); the spinning of cotton thread (Mynso village, Jaintia); the dyeing of cotton thread and the weaving of cloth (Jaintias, Bhois, Lyngngams, Wars); the spinning and weaving of Eri silk (Khyrwang and Nongtung villages, Bhoi and Jaintia); and the hand manufacture, without wheel, of painted earthenware pots (Larnai village, Jaintia). Ironworking and the production of cotton goods have nearly died out through the competition of machine-made goods. Carpentry has greatly improved. An innovation of major importance is the sewing and tailoring, on sewing machines, of ready-made garments for both sexes. [Cf. Darrah 1906, C., W. 1832.] **Trade.** Khasi villages normally contain a number of household shops operated by women. Every Khasi also lives within walking distance of several village markets that are held on successive days of the eight-day week. The limits of market intercourse for the members of any particular village can be roughly distinguished by their naming the days of their week, which are called after the active markets. The exception is the huge market at Shillong, much of which is active daily, and which serves as a magnet for Khasis from all over the hills. The traditional barter has given way to currency in all markets. The small ones contain at least some local farm produce, plus other essentials like betel nut, and the food and tea stalls which serve as centers of social intercourse. The big markets contain not only regional produce and manufactures but also products from distant parts of the hills, brought for sale by traveling middlemen. There is also substantial trade, from the hills to the valleys, in potatoes, pears, hides, lac, cotton, caoutchouc, the wood of the sal tree, Eri silk thread, limestone, coal, ivory, bay leaf, betel nut, pan leaves, bananas, sugar cane, oranges, til, turmeric, and chilies. From the plains to the hills, there is trade in dried fish, paddy rice, salt, cooking oil, kerosene, matches, tea, sugar, wheat flour, machine-made cloth, shoes, metal pots, crockery, porcelain objects, coral beads, silver, and gold. Markets are important not only as economic institutions but also as centers for recreation (including archery competitions), courtship, reaffirmation of kinship ties with distant relatives, and the dissemination of information of all kinds. [Cf. Stegmiller 1924a.] **Division of labor.** Men do the heavy work, such as clearing and burning the swidden fields, caring for cattle and goats and driving them to market, butchering and selling large cuts of beef and pork, carpentry and mining, and driving and laboring on motor vehicles. They also tailor men's

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16: McCormack E-4,5 (1956-1958) 1964
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clothing, operate the large Khasi business establishments in Shillong, and provide all civic and religious leadership. Women care for children and for the home, do the marketing, and sell dried fish, betel nut, lime, fruits, and rice breads at markets. Other tasks can be performed by either sex. **Land tenure.** Land was formerly divided into sib land and public domain. Sib land was corporately held in perpetuity, and was inalienable except by the unanimous consent of all members of the sib. The public domain was subject to usufructuary right by anyone who kept the land regularly under habitation or cultivation, with a lapse of no more than three years. Most villages grew up on public domain, and then reckoned all land inhabited or under cultivation by a village member as village land. Forests were public, except for sacred groves possessed by villages or lineage groups, and everyone was free to gather branches for fuel. Wastelands and streams were also public. By now, most public domain and village land, together with its forest cover, has been pre-empted as private property and is being rented and sold as such. Sib lands remain intact, unless the sibs agree to rent, lease, or sell. [Cf. Cantlie 1934.]

462 294 [423] 422 423 [178]

KIN GROUPS. **Descent.** Descent is matrilineal, and the Khasi is a member exclusively of his own matrilineage from birth to death. Adoption, which is very rare, is only within the matrilineage. **Kin groups.** The maximal matrilineage is the sib; this is a named, widely dispersed, strictly exogamous, lineage group, which claims but cannot trace its origin from a single ancestress. Sibs used to meet as corporate groups from time to time. Some sibs are linked with others in large amorphous groups that are unnamed and are defined solely by exogamy. Such a group is composed of two or more sibs, the ancestresses of which are claimed to have been either real sisters or dear friends who out of affection declared that thenceforth their descendants would be as consanguineals. The origin and function of sib-linkage is now unknown, and today the members of a sib will often disagree on whether or not their sib is linked with another. • The minimal matrilineage is the local descent group, or *iing*. This is the largest kin group that normally rallies at life crises. It is said that the *iing* formerly spanned six generations; today, it encompasses only four. If an *iing* grows to more than four generations in a single village, it segments. New houses are located at some distance from the old and the *iing* soon forgets exactly how to trace genealogical connection, except for which segment descended from a youngest sister. The term *iing* may also be applied to an extended family, an elementary family, and a house. The elementary family is the basic domestic unit in Khasi society. In any village there are likely to be one or two households which stand as sole local representatives of the lineage of the female household head. Such a household is known as an

611 [597] 614 602 • [59]

ing from the time it consists of an elementary family until it grows to a local descent group four generations deep. [Cf. Chattopadhyay 1941.] **Kin terminology.** The terms of address given below are also terms of reference except where otherwise indicated, and are uniform for male and female speakers. They were collected in an upland Khasi village near Shillong (cf. Ehrenfels 1953 for some regional variants).

Fa	*pa*
Mo	*mei*
FaElBr	*pasan*
FaYoBr	*pakhynnah*
FaSi	*kha*
Fa youngest Si	*khaduh*
MoElSi	*meisan*
MoYoSi	*meinah*
Mo youngest Si	*meiduh*
MoElBr	*mama, kni*
MoYoBr	*bah* (ref.: *kni*)
ElBr	*bah khynnah*
Eldest Br	*kong bah*
YoBr	*bah deng*
Youngest Br	*bah duh*
ElSi	*deng*
Eldest Si	*lud, kong*
YoSi	*lud nah, lud rit*
Youngest Si	*khatduh*
MoSiSo, MoSiDa	*para* (ref.: *para ar kmie*)
FaBrSo, FaBrDa	*para* (ref.: *parakha*)
MoBrSo, MoBrDa, FaSiSo, FaSiDa	*bakha*

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY. Mode. According to the traditional courtship pattern, a group of young male relatives and friends made nightly visits to the house of some virgin girl in another village, appraising her through banter while she and her parents appraised them, and staying the night to avoid the dark walk home. Marriage was according to the wishes of the parents after negotiation by a go-between from the boy's side. Girls might be 15, and boys 17, years of age. Girls have now acquired freedom of movement through attending school, however. Premarital sexual play is common, and young people choose their own spouses when the girl is about 19 and the boy 21. The most common mode of marriage is elopement, for Christians and non-Christians alike, but some Christians marry in church, and some Khasis still marry according to the traditional ceremony or some variation on it. There are no preferred or prescribed marriage types, nor is there a bride price or dowry. **Form.** Monogamy is the ideal for all. **Extension of incest taboos.** Sibs are exogamous. Other prohibited marriage partners are real and classificatory FaSi and FaBr, FaBrCh, FaMo, and FaMoMo. The MoBrWi is also prohibited. Roy

21: Ehrenfels E-4,5 (1950) 1953 AR7 Khasi AR7

601 Term 19 and 20 — *para kur* and *para kha*; the former for all cousins and half-siblings on the mother's and the latter for those on the father's side, show the consciousness of the matrilineal clan-affinity and the patrilineal biological relationship through their classificatory subdivision, which is also true of

Term 21, 21/*a* and 21/*b*; — the *bakha* are cross-cousins.

Term 21/*b* shows special consideration for the older paternal male cousin of the first degree, who is addressed as *bah* whilst the older maternal male cousin of the first degree is addressed as *kong*, like the older female cousins on both sides.

[192] Term 23, 23/*a*, 23/*b*, — *ksiew* for grandchildren would appear to mean: dog's children. It has, however, been pointed out to me, by Khasi friends, that the Khasi word for dog is *ksew*; not *ksiew*. The Pnár (Jaintia) pronunciation *ki ksu* for grandchildren, and the occasionally occuring designation of great-grandchildren as "cats children" (term 24) and of great-great-grandchildren as "rats children" (term 25), however, would appear rather to suggest the derivation of *khun ksiew* from *ksew* — dog, than from a meaningless separate root.

[193] Term 24 — *khun miaw* (i. e. cats children) for great-grandchildren is used among Plateau Khasi families. BERNATZIK considers with CREDNER, E. LUNET DE LAJONQUIÈRE, MARABAILS and EICKSTEDT the possibility that the name of the Meau has been derived from cats [30]. This is a hill tribe, speaking a language with some similarity to the Mon-Khmer group [31] (to which also the Khasi language belongs). The Meau are living not very far from the possible homeland of the Khasi around the region of S. China, N. Siam and Indo-China. If a parallel should here be assumed, the two complementary Khasi terms No. 23 (dogs children) and 25 (rats children) may appear to be formed on the basis of analogy with the term "cats children" as tribal self-designation. Another explanation, however, of this unusual kinship-term which was given to me by a Khasi friend, contented that each generation, seen from the ancestral parent's point of view, is as numerous as the young of the respective varieties of animals.

Term 25 — *khun knai* (rats children) comments: — see: term 24, (supra).

601/602 Term 26 — *u ñi* — *u kong* as a honorific term for the maternal uncles and the husbands of the elder sisters and elder female cousins on the maternal side, illustrates the great respect shown to male relatives on the mother's side by adding the masculine preposition *u* to the word *kong*, which generally signifies older female maternal relatives, but in this case, their husbands (comp. term 33/*e*). This usage of the term is reminiscent of the Brahmin ceremonies performed for male maternal ancestors, instead of for mothers, grandmothers, etc. It also tallies with my observations, otherwise obtained [32]

[30] BERNATZIK (1947), pp. 6, 7.

[31] BERNATZIK (1947), p. 445, though he denies the inclusion of the Meau into the Mon-Khmer group.

[32] EHRENFELS (1950), p. 34; (1951/*A*), pp. 3, 4, 5; (1951/*B*), pp. 73, 80, seq.

21: Ehrenfels E-4,5 (1950) 1953 AR7 Khasi AR7

namely that male members of a matrilineal clan enjoy, among Khasi as among other matrilineal groups in India, a position which, far from unenviable, is a very high one in itself and doubly fortified by the respect which to the same male family member is being shown (*a*) in his capacity as the father of his children in his wife's clan (comp. term 8 of the list), and (*b*) in that of the maternal uncle (comp. terms 14, 14/*a*, 14/*b* and 26 and 28).

The terms 33/*b*, *c*, *g*, *h*, have classificatory character.

The term 33/*e* — ***u kong*** for the husband's older sister's husband is one of the exceptions of the rule that ***kong*** generally signifies an honoured older female relative but, as in this case, also her husband (comp. term 26).

Term 36/*a* ***u pa*** (father) in its usage among Pnár (Jaintia), also for stepfather is significant. A Pnár child has no legal clan-relationsihp with his/her biological father, who belongs to another (matrilineal) clan than the child and mother. Yet the honorific term ***pa*** is, among Pnár, also applied to a stepfather, although neither legal, nor biological but merely ideological relationship via the mother, exists between stepfather and -child. This use of the word ***pa*** thus seems to emphasize both, firstly the integration of the matrilineal family structure, by making an unrelated stepfather to be looked upon as father, owing to his relationship with Ego's mother and, secondly the important sociological and psychological position of the father in this matrilineal family structure which appears to go back to an old tradition among the Pnár.

Term 41 — ***para 'riew lum*** [33] (Assamese hill tribals) are characteristically termed ***para*** (Brethren), although they are different in many respects, from the Khasi, yet considered as definitely nearer related than all other neighbours, grouped under the

Term 43 — ***dkhar*** (plainspeople) [34], — a term which varies in emotional content from contempt pure and simple to an attitude, somewhat parallel to what ordinary English usage would generally associate with the expression "continental". Marriages of Khasi girls and boys with ***dkhar*** do occur, though infinitely rarer than marriages of (especially educated) Khasi girls with (educated) ***para 'riew lum***, Nepalese, Gurkha or Chinese boys. One of the reasons which is usually being given for this preference for non-Indians is by no means colour-prejudice, but the taboo on either beef or pork which most ***dkhar ïong*** [35] (Indians, Hindus or Muslims, respectively) observe; a taboo which they generally extend to their Khasi wives, thus preventing them from enjoying two favourite Khasi national dishes. Another more psychological reason is the overbearing treatment of wives, which is generally ascribed to ***dkhar li*** [36]. It is in this connection

[33] Literally: Brethren Humans Hill.

[34] With Dkhar are here meant the plainspeople as such; — not the Khasi Dkhar (or Khar) clans which are mostly, if not always, descended from ancestresses who had been captured in the plains and brought to the Khasi Hills; comp. CHATTOPADHYAY (1941), pp. 30/31 and EHRENFELS (1950/*A*), pp. 33/34.

[35] Literally: Plainspeople black.

[36] Literally: Plainspeople white.